



**Isiah Leggett**  
*County Executive*

**Darren M. Popkin**  
*Sheriff*

## **Domestic Violence Coordinating Council**

July 13, 2017  
Family Justice Center  
600 Jefferson Plaza, Suite 500  
Rockville, MD 20852

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Purpose of Meeting:** Sixty fifth meeting to review the County's response to domestic violence and present committee reports. Councilmember Sidney Katz, Chair, convened the meeting at 5:30 PM.

**In Attendance:** The Honorable Sidney Katz, Chair (Montgomery County Council); Debbie Feinstein, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Angela Talley (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); Teresa Bennett (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); William Sollod, (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); Assistant Chief Russell Hamill (Montgomery County Department of Police); The Honorable John Moffett (District Court of Maryland for Montgomery County); Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women);

Via Phone: Eshigo Okasili, Esq. (Community Member);

**Guests:** Lisa Mandel-Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Sydney Montgomery (Summer Associate with the Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz) Michael Subin (Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission); Tina Michaels (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); Laurie Duker (Court Watch Montgomery); Lauren Brown (Yasha Circle Ministry); Margaret Palm, Laura Merriman, Andrea Meyer (International Rescue Committee - Suburban Washington Resettlement Center)

**Absent:** The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); Sheriff Darren Popkin (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Sheila Kamdar (Community Member); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Dorothy Fait, Esq. (Community Member); and Resa Levy (Community Member)

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Sidney Katz welcomed all members and guests. Smita Varia, the new DVCC Program Manager introduced herself.

**II. Approval of May Minutes**

The May 11, 2017 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Debbie Feinstein proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Michael Subin and passed.

**III. Announcements**

Resa Levy sent an update for the Foundation via email. The foundation continues to engage new partners and raise funds and they are on tract to hold the 8th Annual Benefit on October 29th. The honorees this year are:

- Community Leadership Award - Debbie Feinstein
- Foundation Leadership Award: Tom DeGonia
- Founders Award: John McCarthy
- Foreunner Award: Gregg Wims and the Victims Rights Foundation
- Community Partner Award - Bar-T Ranch

Lisa Mandel-Trupp followed up with the Department of Corrections after the DVCC meeting in May where the Responsible Father's program presented. The Responsible Fathers program is not present at the Department of Corrections but there are other comparable programs.

**IV. Presentation: International Rescue Committee – Suburban Washington Resettlement Center**

Margaret Palm, Laura Merriman and Andrea Meyer from the International Rescue Committee – Suburban Washington Resettlement Center gave a presentation on what the IRC does and the services they offer. The IRC assists asylees, refugees, victims of severe forms of trafficking, and Iraqi and Afghan special immigrants (those who help with translation services) with resettlement in Maryland. They provide 8 months of case management which includes assisting immigrants with navigating the area, registering children for school, English classes, career development and job training, and helping with doctor's appointments.

They presented on the additional barriers their clients face if they are victims of domestic violence. Along with the client arriving to the country with their abuser, they are adjusting to new social and cultural norms and dealing with unaddressed past traumas. In some languages, there is no direct translation for common terms, the clients are reluctant to disclose personal matters with strangers and there is a well-founded fear of law enforcement.

They have referred clients to the Family Justice Center, and recently had a discussion with the Victim Assistants on how to best work together.

**V. Reviewing 2017 Accomplishments/ 2018 Goals for the Annual Report**

In preparation for writing the DVCC Annual Report, Smita Varia asked each committee to review their 2017 accomplishments and highlight the committee goals for 2018.

**A. Offender Program and Policy Committee**

Accomplishments: Teresa Bennett reported that the Abuser Intervention Program participated in a University of Maryland Study, and one of the benefits of the study is that AIP did not have to go through recertification process. The report has come up and addressed coordination and services. Teresa Bennett reported that their volume has gone down and there is a concern about whether fewer women are coming forward given the current climate on immigration. There has also been a drop at the Betty Ann Krahnke Center as well. There was a discussion that Montgomery County has done a good job with letting the community know that all services are available regardless of immigration status. However, at the same time, policies are being created on how to respond to Immigration and Customs Enforcement showing up at someone's house. People still feel vulnerable. Tina Michaels also shared that an accomplishment is how Tom Manion revamped the ALERT meetings. The communication between agencies has been helpful and Pre-Trial Services is better able to supervise people because of the information from the Family Justice Center. In addition, if an offender cuts off his or her GPS, or does something else noncompliant, Pre-Trial Services are able to reach out to the Family Justice Center so that they can contact the victims.

Goals for 2018: The Offender Program and Policy Committee will be taking their monthly meetings to different agencies to talk about the roundtable recommendations. The Committee will also explore the practicality of using a validated domestic violence risk assessment tool for pre-trial assessment unit. However, they are also revalidating their current risk assessment tool that they have been using since 2007-2008. Dr. Alston is helping to update it. Whenever the overrides in the pre-trial assessment unit are over 20 percent, the tool needs to be assessed. The Pre-Trial Assessment Unit is currently at 16 to 18 percent for overrides.

**B. Education and Outreach Committee**

Accomplishments: Debbie Feinstein reported that the committee has expanded their relationship with Montgomery County Public Schools for prevention efforts. This year, the annual Choose Respect conference was not only larger in number, but also in diversity and representation. The Coaching Boys Into Men Initiative was expanded into an additional school. The Commission for Women has been doing strategic mapping of the county and where incidences or domestic violence are happening. This mapping will help the committee look at where to expand outreach efforts.

The committee is in the process of revamping the language cards by expanding it from 5 languages to 16 languages. This year the committee has consolidated all of the teen dating violence initiatives (the annual conference, the Expect Respect in class presentations and Coaching Boys Into Men) under the umbrella of Choose Respect.

## **VI. Committee Reports**

### **A. Education and Outreach Committee**

Debbie Feinstein reported that a tentative date for the Choose Respect Conference is April 15, 2018. However, the committee is still finalizing this date and a location. Toby Knapp from iHeart Radio has confirmed to MC the conference again. The committee is working on early promotion and would like to work with students at each school to publicize the PSA contest and dating violence awareness in general.

Debbie Feinstein also reported that Smita Varia and the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse are currently looking at revising the Expect Respect curriculum, including adding more information on how to be step in as a bystander, and being present in more schools this year. The committee also wants to explore how to work more with boys. Debbie Feinstein and Smita Varia attended a presentation on a teen dating violence initiative out of New York, and the presenter cited statistics from the National Institutes of Justice that teen girls are being more physically violent than boys.

Debbie Feinstein, Smita Varia, and Rebecca Smondrowski met with the new Athletic Director for Montgomery County Public Schools and is hoping to expand the Coaching Boys into Men Program. The program will be in 5 schools this year.

Debbie Feinstein further reported on the 16 language card that Smita Varia has designed. This card is meant to be small and discreet. If a DVCC member has any feedback, please email Smita Varia. The cards will be at service centers, community centers, the courthouses and libraries. If a DVCC member has any other location suggestions, please let Smita Varia know. Teresa Bennett stressed that they should be at the HHS services centers.

Debbie Feinstein reported that the committee would like to run a bus campaign which would post signs about the domestic violence services available on the exterior of buses and bus shelters. The committee would like this to be a mutli-agency effort to fund this project. If a DVCC member has any suggestions of agencies that could help with this, or if a DVCC member would like to assist either publicly or privately, please let Debbie Feinstein or Smita Varia know.

Debbie Feinstein also reported that the committee will be running 30 second PSAs at the Kentlands Movie Theater before each movie the month of October. The Family Justice Center Foundation has agreed to fund this initiative.

Lastly, Debbie Feinstein reported that the Montgomery County Fire and Emergency Rescue Services approached several government agencies to do a training for their staff on domestic violence. Smita Varia is creating training and it will be rolled out later this year.

## **B. Victim Services Committee update**

Tom Manion sent his committee update via email since he was unable to attend the meeting.

The Family Justice Center currently has 4 Victim Assistant (VA) vacancies. The interviews have been completed and there are some excellent candidates. The Sheriff's office is finishing up background investigations, with offers to soon follow. Tom Manion and Ngozi Obenime are developing a full orientation and training program for the new VAs when they arrive, and will span their first week of work prior to their "hands on" training. The orientation will include presentations, site visits, and Q&As with all partner organizations.

The Family Justice Center Steering Committee is working collectively on "what's next" for the FJC in terms of expansion of services. Smita Varia has researched what other services are available at other FJC locations around the country and gathering important data and information. There are some promising programs on the horizon and Tom Manion will update the DVCC at the next meeting.

Tom Manion, Ngozi Obenime and Smita Varia had a great meeting recently with Captain Mark Yamada and the MCPD Community Engagement division. They will keep the FJC informed on any community events they do (including an upcoming Latino Health Fair), and the FJC is working to get on the agenda at upcoming community liaison meetings (Hispanic/Latino, LGBTQ, African American) to talk about domestic violence and the services available at the FJC. The FJC will also explore partnering with school resource officers and youth groups they work with for the Choose Respect initiative.

Tom Manion and Smita Varia are Working with the Office of the State's Attorney and other partners to develop domestic violence training for Fire/Rescue commanders/officers as well as front line staff for implementation in the fall.

## **C. Offender Program and Policy Committee**

Teresa Bennett reported that they are still working on developing the contract for the Supervised Visitation Center which will be open 28 hours a week. The timeline will be to start up in October with hiring and training, and the opening of the center would be in January. Councilmember Sidney Katz thought the Center was supposed to open in October, but Teresa Bennett clarified that once the contract has been finalized (which could be anytime between now and October), then they can start the hiring and training and setting administrative processes which will take about 3 months. Laurie Duker stressed the sooner the better since the Armand Center is closing at the end of the summer.

Teresa Bennett also wanted to stress that anyone who works with victims who may bring them to the Crisis Center or the Family Justice Center to have the victims turn off their location devices on their cell phones. There have been incidences where offenders have shown up at the BAK Center.

#### **D. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee**

No report

#### **VII. Adjournment**

Councilmember Sidney Katz, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:45 PM.

**The next DVCC meeting will be on September 14, 2017, 5pm-7pm at the Family Justice Center**



**Domestic Violence Coordinating Council**